

The AMERICAN GIRL

By HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY

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THE AMERICAN GIRL



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A VERITABLE QUEEN

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The AMERICAN GIRL

AS SEEN AND PORTRAYED BY

HOWARD CHANDLER CHRISTY



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Many of the illustrations in this volume are new, some having been made specially for the book. For the use of others thanks are due to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons and Messrs. Harper & Brothers.

Greeting

It is a charming custom in the Army and Navy to end the formal day with a grace to womankind—to drink a toast to the "Sweethearts and Wives" who are the inspiration and the reward of valor. And there seems no good reason why a sort of grace should not precede a book devoted to the praise of those whom we civilians honor no less than do the Boys in Khaki and in Blue.

Wherefore is this page devoted to that "incomparable she," the American Girl—*bonne camarade*, true friend, and lady born and bred, the best of daughters, sisters, lovers, and wives!

In her praise, and for her delight, this book is made. May it win her favor, and add its mite to her renown!

Foreword

The indications are that our own, the twentieth century, will see the evolution of the highest type of womankind the world has ever produced. With the downfall of artificial distinctions will come a corresponding elevation of those qualities that make a natural nobility. That those qualities are to center in the American woman and will find their highest expression in that woman at the moment when youth has brought her to the most perfect development is a conclusion to which we must be driven by the history of her development. Never before has the world offered full opportunity for the perfecting of the

highest type of womanhood; never before have the selected individuals from all the races of the world been brought together under such conditions as to come to the best of which they are capable. And apart from sentiment, uninfluenced by any narrow patriotism, trying simply to see clearly the causes at work and their necessary results, we may confidently declare that the American girl in the future will become a veritable queen of the kingliest of races.

All close observers of the trend of events and the careful students of sociology have seen the beginning that will lead to her apotheosis. No longer cramped in her development by the bands of narrow-minded conventionalism, she has ceased, if we may be for-

given the outworn metaphor, to be a hothouse flower. Despising the pseudo delicacy that was mistakenly considered a necessity to feminine charm, the American girl of to-day finds in outdoor life the true secret of health and the beauty that can have no other secure foundation. Fortunately she has been led to seek her best development through hygiene, and, beginning with no higher desire than health, she has discovered for herself that the fairy, Health, brings in her hands the priceless gift of beauty.

For this lesson the American girl should, no doubt, thank her English cousin, but, more fortunate than her teacher, she has been able to attain results in her own case that far exceed what her cousin's example might have

led her to expect; for, in addition to the sturdy constitution that was the heritage of both, the American girl, owing to the greater admixture of races, possesses capabilities denied to her transatlantic cousin. She has in her veins not only the vigor of northern blood, rather strengthened than weakened by its transportation to the British Isles and then across the seas to our own land, but also something of richer color derived from the intermingling of the larger strain of Celtic with more than a mere touch of the Latin races. Added to her inherent qualities there has been the influence of climate—the tingle of northern frosts, the richer coloring of tropical skies, the unbreathed western winds and the vivacity derived from the changeable life of the eastern coast.



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THE TEASING GIRL

MR. CHRISTY'S MOST POPULAR CREATION

Not all this would have availed to make her what she is; there was, in addition, the unanalyzed electric touch of the American atmosphere. From around her have been blown away the fogs of ancient prejudice. The New World has been given to her as her heritage. Her father, her brothers—all the mankind of the New World—have brought her to a wholesome sense of her own exceeding value. If there has been a fault, it has been an excess of indulgence. She has been the petted child, the protégée, the loved partner, the trusted chum, of the men who have carved her nation out of the raw material. With them she has stood shoulder to shoulder in subduing the wilderness; hand in hand with them she has blazed her way through the forests; alternately with

them she has stood on guard against their savage foes; she has even borne, by the aid of her superb physique, a nearly equal share in their Titanic labor of carrying forward into the wilds the standard of civilization.

That this part was not played by the American girl of to-day is true; but it is also true that there runs within her veins the blood of these mothers of her race; it is their thoughts that by heredity have made the fibre of her brain. The same *camaraderie* that placed her ancestors side by side with the men has given to her a sympathy, an understanding, an appreciation, and a love, that are ready to be given in unstinted measure to the men of her own generation.

It is difficult to state important truths



THE DRAWING OF A CHRISTY GIRL

I.—The First Sketch



THE DRAWING OF A CHRISTY GIRL

II.—Half Finished Sketch



THE DRAWING OF A CHRISTY GIRL

III.—Completed Picture

in their full strength without awakening suspicion of exaggeration, but it will be evident that these elements have all co-operated to produce the American girl of to-day when we have compared her with the women of our own time who have come under none of these influences and been moulded by none of these creative events.

Let us, for instance, compare the American girl who has made her own all the cultivation and advantages brought to her by our civilization with the young peasant woman, who, bundle in hand and kerchief on head, makes her awkward, blundering way amid the throng of emigrants that has been landed in one of our great cities, and gazes stupidly upon the wonders of the New World to which she has come.

What is it that makes the difference between the two? Race, education, and surroundings; and if these words are expanded into their real meaning, shall we not have to put in their stead just such sentences as those we have written to set forth the creating of the best type of American girl?

Nor is it extravagant to assert that there is in the world none to compare with this gracious young queen of our own land. Nowhere else can we find just the same advantages of race, of climate, of institutions, and of freedom to profit by them; and though we may admit that in this very freedom and in these very advantages lurk dangers to be avoided, evils to be escaped, influences that may degrade as well as those that elevate, yet in comparing her of

our own day and generation with her forbears we find a thousand reasons for optimism. There is every sign that the American girl will become more and more the type we should desire for our mothers, sisters, sweethearts, wives; that she will in the future as in the past choose the good and avoid the evil, discard those influences that are clogs in her progress, and turn always toward what will purify and ennoble her nature.

If we consult foreign critics in an attempt to ascertain her faults (for we are glad to confess ourselves prejudiced beyond remedy in her favor and therefore unfitted for dispassionate judgment), we shall be told that she enjoys too great freedom. We shall be pointed to the housewife of Germany, whose horizon scarce extends beyond her own

doorway; to the lady of England, who, until recently at least, dared dream of no career beyond the range of her husband's fixed orbit; or to the French woman of affairs, who enjoys an authority delegated to her by the men of the household; and shall be asked whether the American woman would not be the better for the guiding hand, for the recognition that she must maintain a secondary position.

We can but reply that the American woman is trusted because she is trustworthy, that she has gained her freedom and enjoys it without interference or question because she has shown herself the better for that freedom. If she has acquired all the potentialities, she has acquired with them the power of self-control. Undoubtedly it was a

necessity of our early days when men and women were comrades, when each must leave full initiative to the other, that she should be free from guiding strings; that, like the American soldier, she must learn what to do in the absence of command. Little by little she proved her capacity, and long after the ceasing of those influences which had demanded that she be independent she was still left free from interference because it had been found that interference was unnecessary.

It has been pointed out by historians that there is no means of teaching self-government except by entrusting people with responsibilities, and the history of our own nation has proved to every American that the power and worth of each individual is brought

out only in circumstances that demand self-reliance and self-help.

These general truths apply to the American woman, as well to her nation and her race. From this keynote we may learn to understand how it is that she has successfully appropriated to herself the best qualities from all the different races to which she owes her origin. In her contact with the world, in her need for drawing upon every personal resource to meet the emergencies of her career, she has made trial of the capabilities within her, and has learned to choose from among them those that have aided her in making her own advance.

She has retained the Teuton sobriety of character and power of reasoning analytically.

From the same source and also from her English forbears, she has derived that love of her home which remains a distinguished characteristic in spite of what often seems a detachment when compared with the close dependence upon the home and home circle that is found in communities where women enjoy less freedom. From the French she has derived, either by inheritance or by sympathetic imitation, that grace and lightness that has made the American woman the only competitor of the *chic* Parisienne. The habit of thinking for herself has enabled her to apply even to the lighter matters of dress and demeanor and the management of her household the same Gallic common sense that the bright French woman has otherwise monopolized.



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THE ARMY GIRL

FOREWORD

From the Celtic have been derived two characteristics not obtainable elsewhere: the romanticism that gives love of poetry, art, and music, that confers the power of appreciating them; and also the saving grace of humor, without which great powers must occasionally lead their possessor into undignified absurdities, and with which comes the wit of tongue and of mind that sweetens the acerbities of life and is to clever women both sword and shield in social life.

It is not, of course, asserted that so great a range of powers is granted by the eternal gods to any one American woman; but can it be denied that the best type of American woman may possess any one of the qualities to a high degree and may meet upon their

own grounds each one of her foreign sisters? Indeed, they themselves generously credit the American woman with something of all the qualities that have been named. The English woman cannot deny to her the full measure of physical strength and grace; the French woman admits her good taste and her practical good sense; the German, though she may deny profundity, concedes acuteness; and the Irish woman and her Scotch sister feel sure of appreciation either for keen wit or for dry sarcasm. With the American woman each foreign woman has a point of sympathy and a certitude of appreciation that she does not so often find between herself and the typical women of other nations.

Is it surprising that, possessing such

characteristics and formed by such influences, the American girl in her early maturity reigns an acknowledged Queen? By the blessing of Mother Nature she has been endowed with these varying gifts in such profusion that no heroine of a fairy tale can appear a more dazzling vision of grace and loveliness than the young American débutante, when, unspoiled by the world, she steps over the threshold of womanhood to enter upon her wide kingdom.



THE SWEET GIRL GRADUATE

I

The Sweet Girl Graduate

When Tennyson painted for us his beautiful medley, "The Princess," it is no wonder that he witched the world with his picture of the girls' college "compact of lucid marbles, bossed with lengths of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay." In his day there was no foundation other than the poet's dream for that seat of learning where prudes were proctors, dowagers were deans, and presided over the "Sweet Girl Graduates."

Now the dream has come true, and no sooner have the wedding-bells ceased to ring the departure upon their honeymoonings of that priceless annual

crop, the "June Brides," than all the college bells sound their musical summons to the Alumnae and their friends, telling them that Alma Mater is once more to send forth those Sweet Girl Graduates with hair not more often golden than any other shade. What Tennyson fabled has been fulfilled a thousand fold, and the educated young woman has ceased to be a prodigy—even to herself.

But this is a realization that is often withheld until after the glories of Commencement Day.

There may be upon our patient earth greater glories than these. Even the graduating class, those who must be called "grave and reverend seniors" until the magic diploma shall entitle them "Sweet Girl Graduates," know (as they know all else) that they are

not the greatest things on earth; but they will not deny that they feel as if they were. Of course there are the Faculty, but they are the fixed stars. They remain in the college firmament, and shine steadily. They are, in any artistic presentation of Commencement Day, a background to set forth the main figure by contrast. But the Senior Class are a galaxy of comets. Their orbits have for a while brought them within the precincts of the college, to shine with more or less brilliance upon that tiny world. Now, wearing a train and showing heads more or less bright, they are about to pass into outer space, shining more or less vividly as they pursue courses no astronomer not endowed with the prescience of the Class Prophet could predict.

No wonder they expect to be the cynosures of all eyes. No wonder that not even the Faculty, "ranged" like the poet Gay's judges, can abash them beyond a point sufficient to hasten the beating of the pure little hearts until a livelier pink suffuses the brightening cheeks, and makes them prettier than ever. How impatiently, with the neat essay closely gripped in dainty hands, they await the rising of the President, that tells to each her hour has come, and she must face the critical audience!

How soon that fluttering day of fans and programmes, ribbons and flounce-lets, comes to dusk, the Ivy Planting and the Parting Ode. To the joy of graduating succeeds the sorrow of fare-wells, for the crinkling diploma is a dismissal as well as the feeblest of pass-



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WATER LILIES

ports to the outer world. Too soon are the trunks packed, the chums embraced, the souvenirs exchanged, and the cargoes of waving graduates carried away with eager backward looks toward the cheering throngs that gather to bid them Godspeed. The artist in painting the scene would scarce know whether to entitle it "The End" or "The Beginning."

But when the highest peak of the college buildings is eclipsed by the hills, and the journey home begins in earnest, it is found there is balm in Gilead, and a silver lining even to the cloud that has swallowed the college days, with their succession of books and work and healthful play. For the American college girl has had all three. Tennyson's girl students were idealized

for poetry's sake; but we know that if they were bluestockings of their time and generation, they were in real life anything but what we consider types of right womanhood. The nymphs of his time were neither naiads nor dryads. They were not free of the waters and the woods, the links, the courts, and the open sea. Prunes and prisms were their required studies, and fainting was a popular optional. They were not even picturesque.

The American Girl has graduated from all three. The hand that swings the tennis racquet is the hand that rocks the cradle, and rocks it all the better for having learned a swifter service. The eye that geometrical diagrams would otherwise have dimmed has regained its brightness in following

the long drives across the bunkers. And now that she has earned the right to put aside books and chemicals, she gladly dreams of a long succession of summer days wherein to forget the rigidity of logic, the big words of psychology, the pettiness of botanical families, and to take up instead the pursuits that will pump great draughts of oxygen into the lungs, tinge with crimson the life currents that have at times flagged for a season, and give back to the lithe young body the supple sprightliness that belongs of right to its youth, the lines of beauty the artist-eye dwells upon.

Away with all thoughts of graduation, of examinations, of text-books and scholastic standing! Are there not newer glories to be won in the Tennis Tournaments, or battles to be fought



OUR GIRL GRADUATE

with that firm but kindly old Colonel Bogey, who has so wonderful a knowledge of all the ins and outs of every links, and who is so terribly hard to beat—and so indifferent when overcome? Nor must the long hours be forgotten in which the Sweet Girl Graduate follows the wholesome advice of Walt Whitman, when she "loafes and invites her soul."

Then are the hours when she deigns to admit a rivalry on the part of flowers as lovely as herself, and strolls abroad amid the meadow's beautiful blooms, the roadsides' exquisite fringing, "unprofitably gay," or the spangled surface of the quiet pool, the home of the waterlilies. The spring and summer's flowers seem first to announce and then to celebrate the coming of the Girl Grad-

uates' vacation. They are, after all, no more than a background, and the true dominant figure of the composition does not arrive until the ineffable she stands with her dainty figure a-sway among the flowers—a portrait study made to order.

Otherwise we should have no pictures of girlhood.

It is right that a period of outing and fancy-free days should intervene between graduation and the time when the responsibilities of life are assumed. Graduate girls as well as men need to find themselves before either seeks or finds a mate, and there must be something more than the school or college days in order that the newcomer on life's stage shall be able to apply the old Greek saying, "Know



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THE GOLF GIRL

thyself." Hitherto the words have been little more than a sophomoric sort of class motto, fit when set forth in those mysterious Greek letters to look as wise as an owl and to have as little real meaning. Indeed, without a desire to be worldly wise, the elders might well advise the moth to fly once or twice near the candle, if only to find out that it has heat as well as light in its glare.

The entirely prudent chaperon is not she who shuts the door of the castle with bolts and bars and guards it with men-at-arms in full panoply. Rather will she encourage the Princess to make the rounds of the parapets once or twice, to stroll now and again in the courtyard, or even at times, under suitable escort, to ride abroad where the Princes meet at tilt and tourney. How else shall the

little Princess learn to know her own kind from the baser-born? Or how shall she see that there is a difference between Prince Charming himself and the others? A few vain fancies, even a little surface heart-ache, may save a real trouble later; and, without brushing the down from the peach, may yet help to ripen it—may give the expression that spells thought and experience to the limner of the face.

While the Girl Graduate is yet in a little fear of the bigness of the great round world and the queer creatures that roam to and fro over its surface, she may more safely be allowed a little liberty than afterward, when she has found her way about and has begun to rely upon her own judgment and to question the infallibity of her elders.



A COLLEGE GIRL

Be thankful that there is no such thing in their case as a crop of wild-oats to be sown or garnered, and let them sow the few harmless wild-flowers that will teach them there is something to be gathered from the earth besides the garden flowers and insipid vegetables. A bit of nettle may sting their fingers, and no doubt there will be a few weeds among the posies they bring home from the fields, but they will at least learn the

look of poison-ivy and find the garden parterres more endurable than if the gate leading into the outside world were never opened and their feet never left the graveled paths.

But of course all this sermonizing is strictly for the chaperon, not for her young charge. Enough for the girl the zest of the first vacation that is more than a recess from those endless terms and semesters. She must now learn that it is possible to live a few months without a daily letter from that "most intimate friend" who is to the prospective lover a mere forerunner, as the rag doll is to the infant.

It is not necessary to nip this eternal friendship in the bud. It is strictly self-limited, like some other disorders, and will run its course without harm to

the patient provided it is not caused to strike in by undue repression. Just now both feel that they would go to the altar for one another; but it is not the sacrificial but the matrimonial altar that will put an end to this endless bond, when one is the other's bride's-maid.

So do not grudge the reams of note-paper nor the sheets of postage stamps. The latter help to reduce the postal deficit, and the letter-writing is the best of practice for those daily missives that will not be unlike the others except in beginning "Dearest Harry" instead of "Dearest Mabel." Do not, either, take pains to tell your young charge that you have been through it before. You can never convince her of the fact, and you may be mistaken in your belief. Times are changed, and your old-time friend-

ship with Penelope—now the mother of six, the eldest a junior at the University—may not be the identical bond that unites this Twentieth Century pair.

If all this is aimed over the head of the Sweet Girl Graduate, and is meant for the ear of the Kindly Lady who is her Keeper, it is only because the youngster herself will be more apt to go right than wrong, and is likely to need the chirrup of encouragement rather than a strong hand upon the rein. Let her come to you for help when the paths seem to divide, and do not cry out "Shoo!" whenever some Prince crosses her path. The time has come for the exchange of words and glances, and even if a dainty flower is thrown now and again over the wall there is no harm done and none meant. The flower

will wither soon enough. And her life-pictures will gain a touch of romance.

The Girl must learn to use her weapons. She must learn to keep her eye upon the adversary's, to have a supple wrist and a steady arm, by the handling of the foils before the days when the swords are pointed and the fencing in grim earnest. You are not always to be at her side, and she may have to take lonely roads or by-paths where armed highwaymen are now and then met with. In those days she will have no *maîtresse d' armes* to teach her the sly tricks of fence, and this is the time of peace in which to prepare for war. Remember how the King left the Black Prince to win his spurs, and what the young man became.

The Sweet Girl Graduate can not

long remain in this quiet valley that intervenes between the little world of college and the great world of all-outdoors. Here she has no real duties save to prepare for those that are to come. She is like the young Knight who keeps vigil before receiving the accolade, and, if she has been faithfully nurtured and rightly trained, she will have made for herself truer and more faithful vows than we can teach her.



THE DÉBUTANTE

II

The Débutante

As each new Spring brings its harvest of flowers, so each social season sees the advent of the débutantes, the young heiresses of all that is most precious in our civilization. It would seem as if this old workaday world with its absorption in projects the most practical—in its digging of great canals, its rearing of sky-scrapers, its grim making of wars, prosy conclusion of treaties, its despatching of smoky steamships, its running of rumbling trains, would have no time and no inclination for the nurture of this best of its products. But somehow the little ones are reared, taught, and trained. They grow in sweetness and in beauty,

amid the stone and brick rows of cities, upon the lawns and garden plots of the suburbs, out in the open of the country-side; and when they are brought by the wholesome air and clean sunshine to full maturity, then the apron-strings are cut, the young wings are spread, and out into the great world flies the girlish flock—a little timid, though with the boldness of innocence; full of curiosity, though assuming an air of worldly knowledge that deceives not even themselves. Such is the army of débutantes, coming with the air of conquerors.

To them the whole world is new, and they fondly believe that they are as new to it; and yet—so it has been since the old world began its wagging. No sooner was marriage and the giving in marriage invented than the débutante

became a fixed institution—breaking her way from the home shell, to walk abroad and gaze with wistful wonder upon mankind, and to inspire in the artists dreams of beauty ever new.

Whether robed in furs and adorned with chipped shells, or rustling in silks and topped by a powdered pyramid of hair, the débutante stepped upon the world's stage to stand abashed before her admiring audience until she had regained her composure, and had learned to play her part.

What a pageant has been passing along since the world began! Imagine the successive bevies of maidens who have turned the heads of all our fore-fathers! Picture to yourselves the quaint and curious costumes, the old-time airs and graces, the play of fans and flutter

of ribbons, the pretty coquetries that wrought the subjection of our great-great-grandfathers. They have won the homage of brush and palette since such things were.

And with each generation of social princesses there has been the throng of male courtiers to gather about each and teach her sovereignty. During each brief reign her little comedies and tragedies are enacted, and then she makes her choice, and on the arm of Prince Charming moves gladly into the background to give place to her younger sister, the rightful heiress to the throne.

But these old-time débutantes cut no figure in the minds of our American belles. They look forward. The school-books with their dry annals of the past



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A DEBUTANTE

are too recent a torture to make real history — the history that includes woman, the home, and the fireside, as well as man, the forum, and the battle-field—an attractive field of thought.

The young girl finds the life around her better worth while than the dead past. She prefers to see the ball-dress of the reigning belle to reading in the pages of Dr. Dryasdust about the costumes of Sir Walter Raleigh and Elizabeth. To her the only memory of Raleigh worth recalling is the incident that depicts him as laying with his rich cloak a path for both his royal mistress and for himself—the latter a short-cut to her favor. If she would re-read her Elizabethan history, however, she might well regret those days of courtly phrasing and deft compliments. Then it



HER CARRIAGE WAITS

was that the poets knew how to sing my lady's praises in right terms, though the artist had but begun to know his craft.

But much of it was lip-service. If we will not learn from history, we may learn from Shakespeare not to envy the lot of the women of Merry England. Indeed, we have in our own land the very best of the Elizabethan traditions.

The best manhood of that time was in those of their sons who left England to the restored Stuarts and crossed the

Atlantic to make the "New England," that included not only the colonies so called, but also the Virginias and their neighbors. From this sturdiest stock came the founders of the new world, and no small element of their strength was in their respect for womanhood—a respect that came with them into the wilderness, and blessed their homes in the forest clearings.

It is a pity that such truths must be put in a bookish way. It would be well if it were known to every one of our American girls that it is made easier for her to grow into a pure and upright womanhood because the men who made our nation were the husbands of good wives and the fathers of true-hearted daughters. They respected their womankind, and they taught that respect to

the thousands whose ships follow theirs across the seas.

He was a good American—that railroad gatekeeper who stopped the emigrant family, and with the authority given by his blue coat and brass buttons made the father take from the over-burdened wife the heavy bundles she was carrying. The father relieved his helpmeet, and took his first lesson upon the respect due womanhood under the Stars and Stripes. It was a moving picture that carried a moral.

It is no wonder that our American débutante comes to her inheritance as a young princess is presented to her loyal subjects. What authority she has known has come from the law of love, not from the tyranny of manhood. She has been guided and she has been

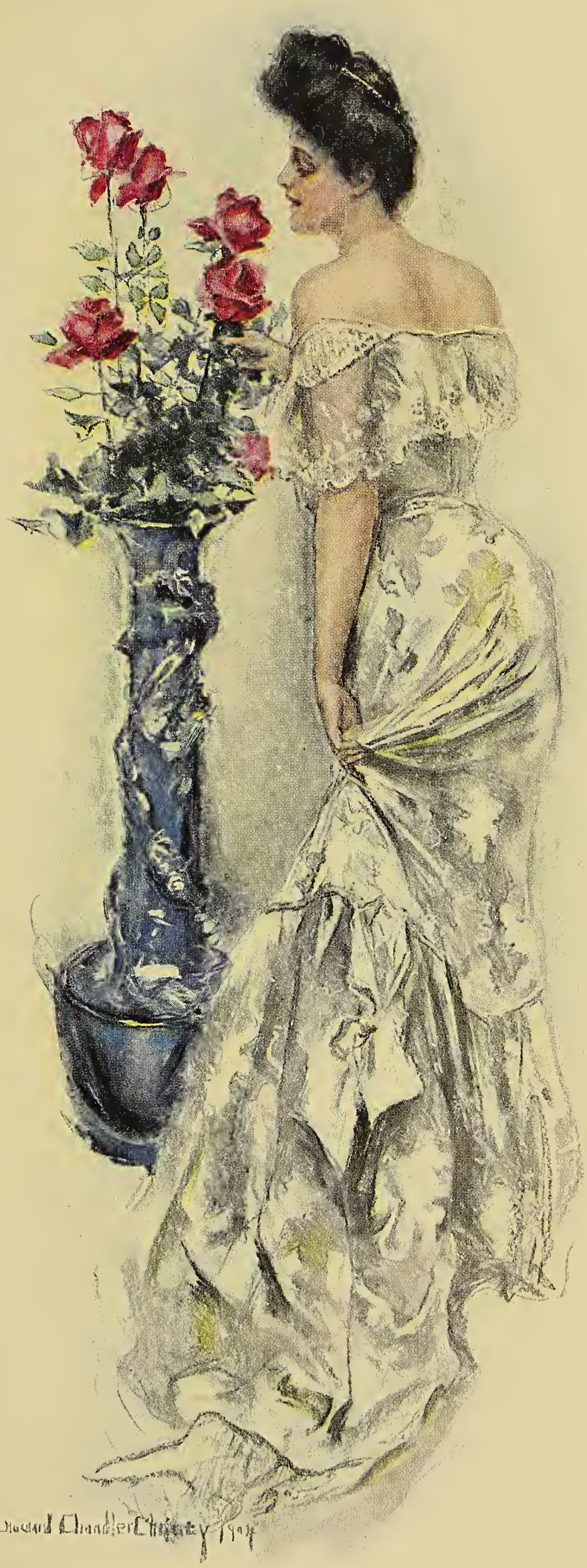
ruled, but the bounds set to her liberty have been for protection rather than restraint. If she has, even in girlhood, been less hedged about than her foreign cousins, it is because she may wander more widely without fear of harm. Even beyond her home bounds, she has been secure in the protection afforded by the knowledge that every American man worthy of the name has been her sworn knight, ready to keep far from her whatever might in any way offend or do harm.

An Englishman expressed amazement at the absence of fences about our public lawns, asking what kept the people from ruining the grass and destroying the shrubbery. But his American friend asked, "Why should the people do harm to their own property?"

And so it is with our American girls. They are the nation's pride, and every American is vowed to come to their aid if summoned.

It is not the chivalry of a class, but the chivalry of a people; not the loyalty to a woman, but loyalty to womanhood that safeguards the American girl. And she is like a sovereign of old who goes fearlessly among her people, knowing that she can rely upon their fealty better than upon a guard of armed retainers.

This it is to which the débutante has looked forward, and when at last she feels that she has come to her own is there any wonder that her cheeks should glow, her eyes gleam, and her smiles shed sunshine? There is but one other season in her life that can rival the triumph of these first days of freedom



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AMERICAN BEAUTIES

and of independence—the maiden's Fourth of July. Only as a bride does she reach greater glories and reign with more assured security.

How does the World receive the débutante? Does it wrinkle its cynical brows, narrow its weary old eyes, and shake the head of doubt over the young fledglings that stand upon the edge of their nests thinking, with longing only faintly tinged by dread, of their first flight?

Old Father Time and Old World his crony must have their thoughts. They have stood the clear-eyed scrutiny of so many youngsters—fine or super-fine; and they have seen so many bright eyes lose lustre, become dull, and at last close wearily, that the old couple cannot quite share the pretty optimism

of these dainty misses looking shyly into the great assembly room. But there is an understanding between the two worn Oldsters, and they have long since agreed that there would be only cruelty in turning a harsh side or a cold shoulder upon these bright maidens, who, after all, are the greatest treasures either Gaffer Earth or Father Time can ever show.

So both smile. The old gentleman with the scythe and hour-glass tries to seem accommodating. Really—to tell you a secret—he never changes his pace; but to suit these favorite daughters he will seem to hustle his old bones along at a rate none of their elders ever witness, or, again, he will seem to loiter until an hour seems a veritable age, and a week becomes a period

neither end of which is visible from the middle.

Sly as is Father Time, his co-conspirator is no whit behind in guileful benevolence. By a curious magic akin to alchemy he can transmute all his outward semblance into at least the glitter of gold; by an art that puts to shame the best efforts of the cosmeticians he can sweep from his forehead the furrows of trouble and care. So it is that the fair young miss sees nothing to justify the evil reputation of the two old gentlemen against whom the rest of us cherish so many grudges. Her smiles are reflected upon their aged masks and so she reads nothing of their guile and guilt. They are like two old patriarchs who sit for their portraits, trying to "look pleasant."



FIRST SKETCH AND COMPLETED PICTURE

To such a young questioner as she even the Sphinx forbears to propound insoluble riddles.

Possibly all these have learned the lesson taught by the Baroness Bernstein. She was, you remember, only our Beatrix Esmond grown old and wise; and she knew the lessons of life only too well. But together with a number of harsher maxims she had some merely politic; and among them this:

"Always be civil to young girls, my dear. You never know whom they may marry."

This would be an excellent bit of advice for all of us worldlings; and indeed it is a part of the débutante's charm that she alone of all those who make up society has the magical power of transformation. Before our very eyes

she may change from ragged Cinderella into the gorgeous Princess whose every-day wear is never less costly than old brocade and cloth of gold; arriving in a pumpkin coach with a rusty old rat of a coachman, she may be whisked in a jiffy into the Royal Coach of State with gay postillions and outriders, all a-glitter with gilt and glowing with crimson that shames the sunset clouds.

If in the days of the French Revolution every private soldier carried a marshal's baton in his knapsack, why may not every American girl prudently carry a coronet in her band-box—or, at least, in the modern hat-trunk that has replaced that antediluvian piece of pasteboard baggage?

Thus, in one sense, she is as new as the Spring flowers, and the very embodi-

ment of youth. But, in another, she is in very truth the heiress of all the ages. It is Charles Reade who points out how we juggle with the word "antiquity," meaning at one time that which existed aforetime, and at another that which has come latest in time and has the longest history. The American girl herself is new sprung into being, but all the history of the world has gone to her development. The ancients lived in the world's callow days; we inherit all their store and that of the whole long genealogical line that unites our day with theirs.

The debutante in her first season has required to equip her for her entry into life the experience of all the ages. She is the culmination of mankind's long struggle upward from his barbarism into

civilization. To make her all that she is countless millions have lived and died, handing on to their successors what they have won from the tight fist of Nature's grudging hand.



THE AMERICAN GIRL IN THE COUNTRY

III

The American Girl in the Country

Where is she at her very best? Where is she in her element, as a fish in the water, a bird in the air, a tiger in the jungle? To which scene does she add just what it seems to lack, and which without her presence loses its right tang? There is no true solution of any of these problems. It cannot be said that the American girl finds her only or even her best element amid surroundings of any one kind. We must discriminate, and, while admitting that she is never out of place in any place where she ought to be, yet must recognize that there should be a place for every girl and that every girl, in her

own place, shines like a well-set jewel, with every point of excellence well displayed. Against every background the artist will find her an inspiration and a study.

Thus we have the Girl of the Mountains, with the sturdy frame of a Tyrolese maiden reproduced in lesser proportions. She is the one who looks but the better when the mountain breezes play among her curls, and her draperies flutter like the banner of Freedom when it was first displayed to the air. If she carry an alpenstock it becomes a veritable wand, to which she seems to lend her own magic power.

She is the true Oread, the Mountain Nymph, and seems to breathe in life from the gales that sweep over the lofty uplands or snow-clad peaks. Every



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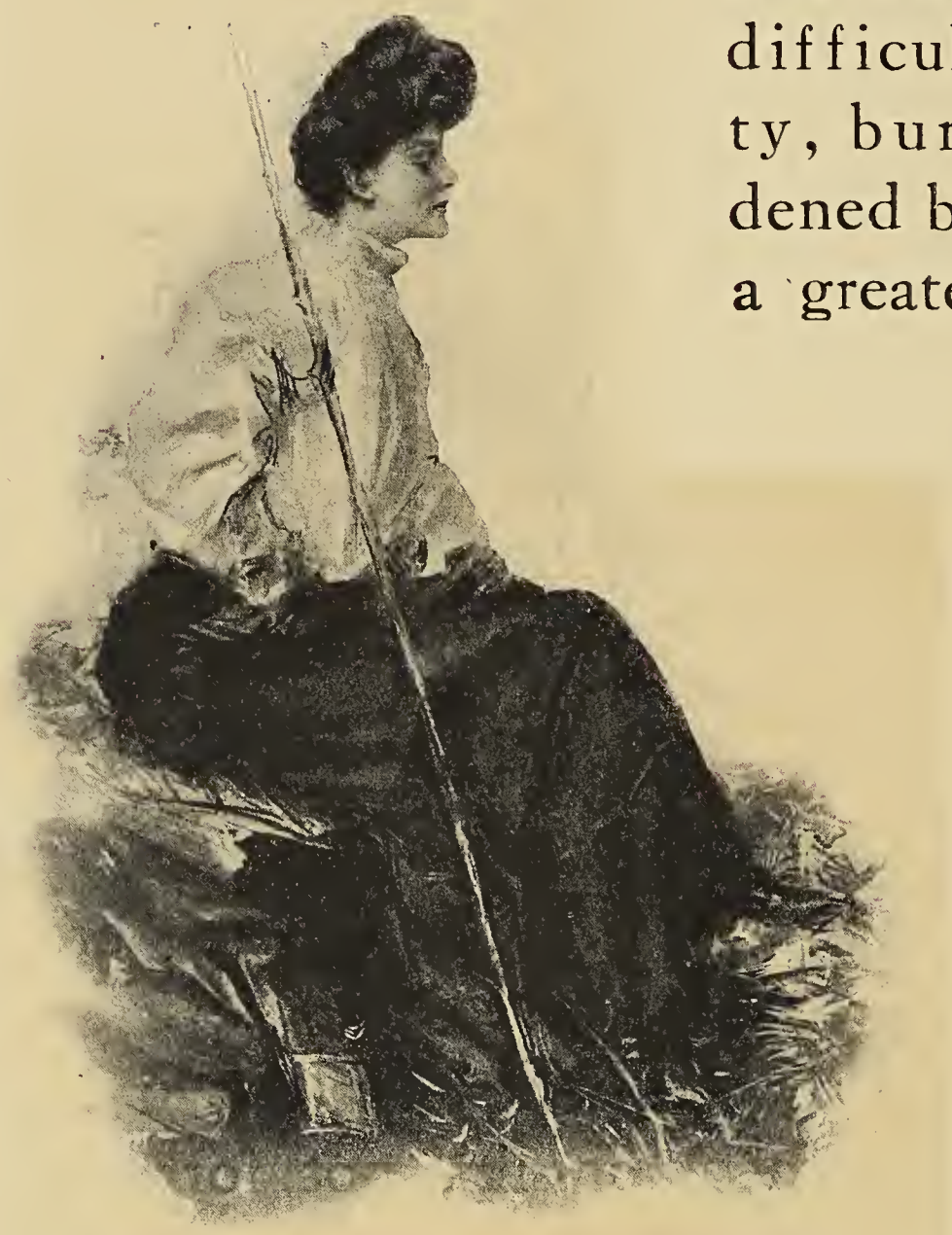
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ON THE BEACH

attitude is a new revelation of her grace and her daring, and the whole frame changes from balance to balance as if no slope was too steep for her little feet to climb. Her eye gazes abroad with a freedom that scorns a narrow horizon, and she seems rightly enthroned when perched upon a ledge that enables her to be monarch of the wide-spreading regions she surveys. From these heights all is softened into a hazy beauty from which all that is sordid has been removed, leaving only broad fields, long winding rivers, placid lakes, and plumy woodlands. Rightly painted, her face reflects the dreams these breadths inspire.

If she has a companion, it is only for companionship, not for aid. He attends her steps, but does not lead the

way. Lighter and more nimble, she finds the chamois path, and swings easily upward where he can follow only with difficulty, burdened by a greater



THE GIRL OF THE MOUNTAINS

weight and having an eye slower to spy out the practicable way. And when they are come to the summit, there is little frivolity in such altitudes. The big world below is too evident, the wide sweep of sky is too grand for inane speech. The Mountain Girl is of a serious frame of mind, too wholesome for folly, too sedate for silliness, and yet with a whole-hearted simplicity that makes her the best of friends, and, at the right time, the truest of lovers. She does not lack sentiment, but is never sentimental. For the sentimental we must descend again into the valleys, and seek the little lady who, perched in an easy rocking-chair, is content to love the purple mountains from a distance.

The true Girl of the Mountains looks upon them as a challenge, not as a

dreamland about which to weave vague and unreal romances.

She is a more energetic type than her sister of the Shore.

The lover of the beach, be it understood, and not of the open sea, of the land rather than the trackless paths of of ocean, is the true Shore Girl. The summer beach is hers; the long, gently sloping bank of yellow and gray, trimmed with the brown seaweeds, defined by the green-tufted sand dunes and patiently suffering the beating of the billowing breakers, indifferent whether these come in raging fury like a conquering army of horsemen, or whether they steal playfully up the slope like a band of timid children trespassing upon forbidden ground.

For the Shore Girl the beach is at its

best in the long days of summer, when the sea breeze comes steadily in, the breakers roll in regular succession, the clouds drift slowly by, and the warm rays of the sun seem to permeate like a mild old wine, strengthening, warming, slightly stimulating, but soothing even more than they excite. These are for her the halcyon days.

She may claim a love of surf-bathing, and certainly appears each day at the bathing-hour arrayed for a meeting with Father Neptune. But the embraces of that rather unceremonious old salt are rather less caressing than boisterous, and she seems glad enough to retire to her own domain, well beyond his reaching foamy fingers. Surely she has not the eagerness of the strong swimmer who darts through the waves, greets the

slapping of the spray with a laugh, or lies extended in the salty bath feeling himself one with the sea creatures, or at least second cousin to the tumbling porpoise.

The Shore Girl likes best the long hours when she can sit gazing out to sea, or alongshore, with an unread book upon her lap, and a bit of unworked fancy-work loosely held in her lazy little fingers. But she does not seek nor enjoy solitude. She does not mind the half-inaudible gossiping of her chaperon and another dowager, and listens whenever a bit of harmless scandal is spicy enough to hold her attention; she likes to see her little brother build his sand castles, provided he come not too near; and she certainly has not the slightest objection when some other



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GATHERING ARBUTUS

girl's brother follows her little footsteps to the lee of the old wreck, and, daring the reserve of her first reception, begins —oh, so lamely—the little talk that will excuse him for lingering at her side.

But she makes a picture that cannot be painted from observation. The artist must re-create it from the merest sidelong glances.

Then the Shore Girl is entirely in her element. She cares little for the rugged mountain-paths, where conversation is impossible, accepts the sea-bathing as a conventional preamble, but is wholly at her ease only when enjoying the "sweet do nothing" just beyond the waves' furthest line.

But there are others than the lovers of craggy heights and smooth sea-beaches. Shall the long and wandering rivers go



THE EQUESTRIENNE

their way to the ocean, and never glow with the reflection of a smiling maiden's face, or glitter with the light of her eyes? The question is put, of course, only that we may reply with a heart-felt "No—oh, no!" after the manner of poets and emotional dramas. The débutante is not the only one who goes down to the sea in ships or leans gracefully over the side of a rowboat to dabble her pink finger-tips in the water—to the ill-concealed impatience of her escort as he leans well over to the other side so that she may not take a sudden "header."

For my little Lady of the Rivers, like her native element, is a sportive imp; she loves the play and the dash, the turn and the sparkle, the sudden rush of the rapids, and then the sedate

gravity of the wider reaches where the river begins to realize that it has gone from the childhood of a trout brook to the grave manhood of a highway of commerce—all are hers.

We need not wrinkle our brows too tightly nor think too deeply to know it must be so. The playfulness of the maiden — if it be real play and not merely the twinkling of the shallows— comes when the spirit is relaxed. One must have cried to know how to laugh gaily, and this Lady of the Rivers, who dabbles her hand lightly in the waters, knows how to sit firm and face grimly the race of the rapids when the boat shoots like an arrow and the next instant bounds like a bronco. He who would paint her must have observed her in all these moods.

It is the love of novelty, the spirit of adventure, that have brought her into the boat; and, if need be, you will find her capable of taking an oar with those firmly grasping fingers, and pulling away for dear life. She is of the breed of those oarsmen who pulled Old Ironsides through the calm and distanced the British ships in that flight and chase of which no good American can read without exultation. There would have been no need for the poem that saved the veteran vessel from destruction if the Yankee sailors had not been able to outrow their English pursuers; and strength is not all which goes to the making of an oarsman or an oarswoman.

Very likely she may have pulled stroke-oar in her class-boat at college.

At all events, the young man who is desirous of "showing off" will be wise to look well to his feathering, his stroke, and his recovery, if he mean to impress his companion. For aught he knows, she may be at home upon the deck of a careening yacht as well as upon the cushioned thwarts of the rowboat. You can never be sure of either the extent or the depth of her knowledge.

There is a Nautical Lass, an all-round sailor who loves everything that floats, and can handle a tiller, tie reef-points, haul and coil away as deftly as any old tarry salt. She may for the time be masquerading as the River Girl, and, knowing the freemasonry of every sort of navigation, she may hardly be distinguished from the real maid. But possibly there is to the keen eye a difference.



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CANOE MATES

At all events, having met this beautiful buccaneer upon the high seas, when she is all keyed to concert pitch by the salt winds and the long swells of mid-ocean, you will see how little moved she is save by the true blue waves themselves. Thereafter she will never be mistaken for the inland voyageur. Her very costume suggests the deep-sea tints of waves and skies.

If you are a yachtsman, this is the girl of girls when the white sails are spread, the wind is steady, and the water goes slapping against the boat's sleek sides. There may not be many words to show delight in the Viking craftsmanship, but the keen eyes, the firm lips, the bright cheeks, and expanded nostrils are more than eloquent. Whether or not she knows all the branches of her

family tree, you may be sure that in her veins runs the blood that made the American Navy. Some of her ancestors humbled the pride of the Barbary Corsairs, burned the captured Philadelphia, or—but why attempt to compress into a paragraph even the greatest exploits of that service which seems to find nothing but victories on every sea? To do her justice one must paint a series of pictures, showing battle scenes, wrecks, voyagers in unknown seas.

No wonder that the daughter of such men loves the ocean; even back of these later ancestors we shall find men of her race dominating in every clime, and though our ways are new the race is unchanged.



THE AMERICAN GIRL IN THE CITY

IV

The American Girl in the City

The severest test of our American Girl is her transplanting to urban life. In her origin she is a product of colonial conditions; if her lineage derives from the north, she must partake more or less of farmer stock; if from the south, we have only to put the word *plantation* instead of the word *farm;* but the true American must at first have made his living from the soil. Not to have done so proves an arrival from the Old World at a later than the colonial period of our history. There was no other way of making a living. The old patroons, the F. F. V.'s, the Knickerbockers, the early Westerners, even, rooted their

family trees in the good old Adam—the "red earth," if we believe the accepted etymology of the name of the first of mankind.

Since, we have seen a transformation. We have seen the rise of the commercial, the manufacturing class; if old homesteads have been retained, they have become country-houses, and the younger generation have come into town-life. The picturesque is sacrificed to the practical, and the artist is put to it for backgrounds and adjuncts.

City streets, city mansions, manufacturing, commerce, and transportation have become the environment of the descendants of those whose roots lay spread in the country ground. Instead of by a group of neigbors, the American family has been surrounded by the

IN THE CITY



hundreds of thousands of city-folk; instead of a few friends, bound together by a thousand ties, there has come to be a set of groups, related more or less closely, but with none of the interrelation that characterized the society of old times.

To sum up the change in a phrase, friendships have become aquaintance-ships. This is the evolution of what is called "Society." There is no such thing, no need of the term, until the older and simpler ways of living have given place to a more artificial substitute, bringing also a new literature, a new drama, a new art—the art of silks and laces, the *vers-de-société* of illustration and painting.

This change is inevitable, and brings in its train a thousand and one transformations, all of which have their influence upon the young girl.

The normal excuse for the social whirl is after all "the love that makes the world go round," and this love is that which leads to orange-blossoms and the wedding-march. If this were not



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AT THE THEATRE

so—what an unbearable round of trivialities would be the tea-table gatherings, the dances, the kettledrums, the amateur theatricals! They could not end save in the nothingness of small-talk, and in the bathos of discarded ball-gowns. Like the play with Hamlet omitted is the "Society-picture" where love is not the motif.

The married folk either have or should have more serious pursuits. They have come to the time of life when ambition, worldliness, and practicalities overshadow romance; and for them social functions are the smaller side of their lives. But to the American Girl in Society the social observances are the main purpose of her life. For her these gatherings of young and old, these passings, greetings, eddies of

small talk, these dramas *in petto*, these tragedies of a lost glove, of a faded rose; the little battles of wit, waged as keenly as if for an empire, are fraught with great issues. For her each new introduction may be the "Open, Sesamé," to a fairyland, to a treasure-house or to a den of robbers. Naturally, then, it is a matter of moment, and in no way to be compared to the casual meetings of her elders.

Likewise, to her, each theatre-party, dinner, assembly—may be the occasion ever more to be marked with a golden number or a red-letter. She must consciously or unconsciously carry out the scriptural injunction to watch for she knoweth not when the bridegroom cometh.

Believe it or not, as you please, the

young Girl and her satellite the young man are the central orbs around which all city-life that is not merely utilitarian must revolve. And when the American Girl was transplanted from the country to the city she was profoundly influenced and materially changed. She assumed two new layers. Popular language calls them by two words that mean much. She assumed both a "veneer" and a "polish." The first is a borrowed surface, the second a mere finish. Both were a necessity.

With the growth of a true "Society" came its formalities, its observances, its conventions; and these the American Girl acquired with the quickness of a ready brain, an observant eye, a docile spirit. Coming of people who had fought the formal, she did not receive unques-

tioningly all imported from abroad, neither did she hasten to abandon her own ways for new simply because some of the new ways were requisite.

Possibly, while in transition from the old to the new, the American Girl gave the foreign aristocrats some cause for mirth, some excuse for an occasional criticism. She had a lesson to learn, and, like all new pupils, was hazed by the older students. But she soon acquired and assimilated all that she cared to make her own, and then proceeded to modify what she had learned, as her brother acquired and modified the game of Rugby football. She put on such of her foreign sisters' garments as suited her, and subordinated them to herself. She may be painted in a mantilla or bolero jacket, as the artist chooses.

From being a docile pupil she soon became an innovator, an inventor, a dictator of social usages. The American Girl abroad, laughed at for a few seasons, became an equal, a rival—and at last bids fair to give lessons to her teachers. Wherever the American Girl has gone, is it not true that she has begun as the Japanese began, by learning all the foreigner had to teach, and, with this start, soon passed beyond the teacher's highest achievements? Ask the English what the American *Cousine* has accomplished in the social and political life of the Empire.

That the same thing cannot be said of other lands is due to the lack of a universal language. If the young girls of other lands knew their own best interests, they would fight the introduc-



CHRYSANTHEMUMS

tion of Esperanto—the world language. If all the world were Esperantists, there would be no possible bound to the conquests of Miss America. Say what they may, it is not only the American dollars that win the foreign noblemen. Who would not rather marry a boon companion than a mere feminine nonentity? The American Girl has not been taught to distrust everything in the shape of man, and even when she enters through the city-gates she does not become a mere cipher to be annexed to some significant masculine digit.

We read in a current newspaper that "Woman is, of course, affected by the motor-car in a variety of ways, for it has revolutionized many things feminine—love, friendship, social affairs, dress, the toilet, the complexion." But the Amer-

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ican Girl is adaptable, and will not be less charming because of such modifications. Even in the motor-car, she is not willing to be only a passenger. She does not wrap herself in her dust-coat while Sir Galahad is trying in vain to adjust the other sparker. She learns how the wheels go round, and becomes quite capable of taking a hand as the most daring and capable of chauffeuses. She knows how to swing around a curve without skidding, and can ease the motor-car over a rough road as skillfully as her brother. She may well be the artists' inspiration to paint a new "Chariot Race" in which she shall be the central figure—the charioteer in triumph!

She knows the pride of a creditable run, the joys of full speed, and the fas-



"SHE SIZES HIM UP FROM AFAR"

cination of the open road. No wonder that she is a welcome companion in every car, the sworn ally of the amateur chauffeur, and that her fluttering veil is the standard of the modern knight of the road. Then, too, when the car is safely housed, and the guests gather around the table at the country house, she is none the less delightfully feminine and domestic, although she may have come from the city limits at the rate of sixty miles an hour. She has the physique that despises the vibrating car, the wit and grace that spiritualizes the dinner table, the tact that puts her friends at their ease.

Without being dominated by them, she accepts the limitations of urban life, makes them her own means of expression, and thereby regains the freedom

of which they might have deprived her. Only in her own land is this possible to woman.

In America exists no fixed aristocracy. Even Trust Magnates do not dominate our social life. Millionaires cannot make vulgarity fashionable beyond a certain parasitic circle. Great artists and great writers—what American Girl yields in social matters to the authority of a picture or a novel, of the wielders of brush or pen?

Quite often the social conventions of a city are established by some unpretentious little dame whose rule is based upon the consent of the governed, and justified by a long record of successful administration.

Men are what women make them, and as the young girl is bent so is the

matron inclined. The American Girl worships her own social idols, and these she makes for herself. Missionaries from abroad may now and then make a few proselytes to another cult; but their converts are never many.

Whether this social state will last, is another question. May we confess frankly that we do not know? Social philosophers have been absurdly wrong in their forecasts about American affairs. The American Girl is a new element in history, and whether she will become like her sisters of other lands no man can safely predict. She has not been subjugated, she has not been unsexed, she has not been transformed into the bachelor girl, nor yet into the short-haired suffragist. She has gone on as she began—growing



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A FAIR CHAUFFEUR

from a boyish childhood into an unafraid maidenliness, then into a capable matronage, and later into an unsoured old age, leaving to her successors an example worthy of their emulation.

The poets and artists depict her as she is,—and are grateful. They do not attempt prophecy.

We have no fears that city life will change more than externals, nor that in becoming a society woman she will sacrifice her domestic virtues. It is fortunate that our cities are new, that with all their bigness they do not enslave and color the soul as do London and Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Rome.

The American Girl derives from the whole sweep of the nation. She achieves by her birthright the Freedom of All Cities, and owns them all, as they all

own her. We have no New Yorker, no Bostonian, no Philadelphian, no Virginian or South Carolinian who feels by birth excluded from pride or sympathy with other Americans. If there exists a local pride, it is jocularly urged and apologetically claimed. If we try to picture a city type, it must be labeled before it can be recognized.

That it exists we do not deny, but it has not sufficient vitality to survive when brought into conflict with true patriotism. The American Girl is not of a city or a state, but the whole boundless continent is hers.



THE AMERICAN GIRL IN SOCIETY

V

The American Girl in Society

It is fruitless to consider the American Girl as a generic problem. No mere man has ever been able to approach to a comprehension of the complexity that makes up the feminine nature; but those have come the nearest to an understanding who have frankly given up the study of the species and been content to become specialists—students of the individual.

If in all the humility of a worshiper one approaches the single divinity in petticoats, he may hope to arrive at a point where he recognizes his blunders at the time of making, or soon after they have been made.

Only so can one, by a lifetime of devotion, achieve some knowledge of the numberless divagations of the feminine mind. Certainly he who was interested only scientifically in the study would never choose the American Girl as an "easy optional." He would choose, rather, some being of unmixed race, subject to simpler conditions, and in a state of civilization that had come to some well-fixed conclusions in regard to its own status.

The artist's problem is hard enough without so puzzling a subject to complicate it.

In the American Girl are none of these. She is the product of half a dozen civilizations; she has been brought up from childhood on an eclectic system that strives to combine

the best features of all, and—one may well wonder whether she understands herself. What with German music, French art, English literature, Irish humor, Scotch theology, and Austrian etiquette—to say nothing of Japanese physical culture and a touch of Hindu theosophy, it is a wonder that there is any trace of true native Americanism left in the fair



A SOCIETY GIRL

creature. She is a composite photograph of all civilizations.

And yet, despite surface embroidery, there is the solid warp and woof of the homespun fabric. In individual cases this may have become lost to sight, but when there comes the wear of life, and the surface of the true fabric is revealed, it is found to be the same strong, enduring stuff that her great-grandmothers knew. And it is the harmonizing of this wear that gives to the fabric the autumnal beauty of middle life.

She has her days and her evenings of pure frivoling. She knows the merely ephemeral novel, and pretends to be absorbed in the shallow fortunes of the paper people within its covers. She knows the vaudeville show and enjoys

its nonsense as heartily as in the season she follows the grand opera and criticises the voice of the tenor or the basso. She does not disdain the matinée, box of bonbons and all, and permits herself the indulgence of the photograph of her favorite first juvenile.

Not a prude, she yet enforces the respect that is the tribute to her pure womanhood, and enjoys the freedom that comes from fearless innocence rather than enforced ignorance. She allows herself even the harmless flirtations that add spice to her little pseudo-romances, and ever delights to play the petty tyrant over the square-shouldered giant whom in reality she holds in an awe he never suspects. She never seems conscious of those challenging glances he directs toward his capricious sover-

eign, being as evasive as the rainbow and as indifferent as the Sphinx. So Gérôme's great painting of Napoleon in Egypt, gazing upon that questioning Colossus, has its little parallels in every-day life.

It is a pretty comedy when watched by the veterans who have won or lost their own battles years ago. Wiles that were old before the flood, tricks that ensnared the great-great-grandfathers of our great-great-grandfathers, are "invented" anew by these little harmless sinners, and the heroes of the University races, of the football-field, the Solons of the Senior classes, bark their awkward shins or bump their great foreheads over the same barriers that have tripped up the thousands and tens of thousands of their wise elders. And one

need not be a major prophet to predict with all certainty that little boys now in their cradles will make the same obstacle-race with the same stumbles.

The course over which true love must run will never be so mapped that youngsters will find it clear or smooth. Yet competitors present themselves as eagerly every hour; prizes are won, and indeed they are all well worth the running and the winning—and as well worth the study of the looker-on.

It is a sort of bridge-whist, wherein the man always plays the dummy, always loses the game, and yet is very likely to carry off the stakes—won or unwon. It is perhaps more a game of poker, in which not the best hand but the best bluff wins. Among certain savage tribes there is an institution

known as the marriage-race. In this particular means of match-making, the blushing and diffident maiden is allowed a start of the pursuing lover—a start so nicely calculated that only by a careful pretense of being unable to escape can she let the right man win—all others being hopelessly distanced.

Our own methods differ in outward semblance—but are they so very unlike in essence? All the handicapping is in the girl's favor, and poor Prince Charming is allowed only the advantage of being able to put an end to his doubts and discouragements by the expedient of jumping from the frying-pan of courtship into the fire of a proposal.

Until he has been brought to that point—for brought he is, whatever he

may think, and brought by an art that is at times concealed from the fair diplomatist herself—he is the victim of a being of capricious moods and fancies, a being only the more fascinating because of her ability to deal with the same pink fingers a cruel blow or a sweet caress. Since the world learned its runes and developed them into the A, B, C, poor man has found no truer type of the feminine hand than the kitten's paw—velvety softness and cruel little claws that can draw blood when the owner chooses to give pain.

Against his small foe, what defense has man? Only a violence that he dare not use. Hence his subjugation, and his fear. He is like an athlete attacked by an angry and fearless small

boy; his best plan is to retreat, and wait until reason resumes its sway—which, in the case of a being swayed by impulse, may well be some time. Possibly the reason all the world loves a lover is found in man's sympathy and woman's regret for the suffering the poor fellow is undergoing.

And yet, who would not recall those glorious days when first the ineffable She has become incarnate before his enraptured eyes? Every fibre of a man's being is thrilled to the music of his soul; and together with the rapture of the poet, the beauty-love of the painter, the ardor of the hunter, the subtle scheming of the statesman, he knows the madness of the gambler who has staked his happiness upon the word of one who is to him an unsolved



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AT THE OPERA

mystery. No wonder the great painters loved to paint the episodes of courtship and love.

And the whole disease, or unease, is an epidemic, ever old, ever new. The cure is possible but never certain; and the malady one that never loses its interest for all the world and his wife. To escape its ravages is not to be immune from curiosity concerning its effect upon others, and so the big world looks on, either praising or blaming, laughing or crying, and no sooner does one pair of lovers cross the stage, disappearing into the wings, than another couple paces along in their predecessors' footsteps, and there is a continuous performance of the great Tragi-Comedy of "THE WAY OF A MAN WITH A MAID." No wonder that the

veterans who have played their parts glance ever up from the whist-table, the embroidery-frame, or the improving book "suited to their age," and smile to see the young couple holding other hands than those dealt them, and playing a game older than chess, draughts, or blindman's buff.

Perhaps we are prejudiced in preferring the American Girl as an opponent in this old pastime. If so, we are willing that other nations should make choice of their own compatriots, and leave the native girls to our own young men. If there must be a protective tariff, it should take the form of a prohibitive tax on the permanent exportation of American daughters.

Every mother's daughter of them should be required to file an enormous

bond, forfeitable unless she returned and married on this land. Should there be a young man abroad capable of rightly appreciating one of our young Princesses, he should prove his devotion and his good sense by immediately forswearing allegiance to all other potentates and powers except the said American Princess, and taking out naturalization-papers as a preliminary to the marriage-license or the wedding-certificate.

Since he has appreciated an American girl, he ought to make a good citizen of the Republic. To such immigrants the most rabid American could find no well-founded objection. We commend the proper legislation to the attention of both houses of Congress. But we do not promise, that

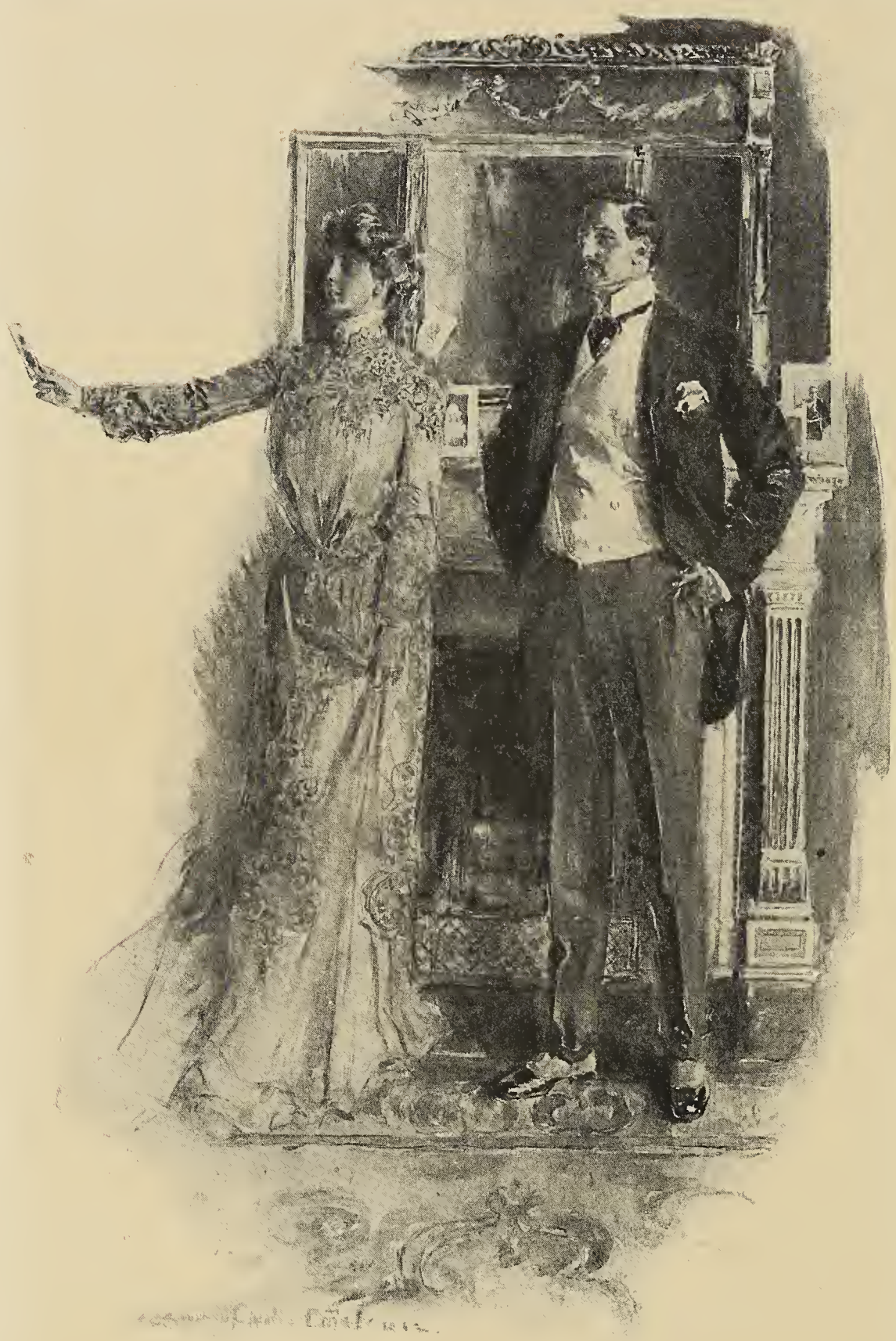
if the bill passes it will secure for them the favor of the American girl, nor yet of that lady's mother. It is the duty of statesmen to legislate, while artists or poets or novelists record facts or fancies as they present themselves.

Possibly it will be best to leave the foreign nobleman a fair field, so that the young man of the Republic may be put upon his mettle and be awakened to ardor in the pursuit of his by no means reluctant quarry. It does not seem a right place for the application of the doctrine of protection, since the American Young Girl scorns to be protected; the American young man is quite ready and able to undertake the enterprise of protecting her, and the foreign noble-

man will be entirely safe if only he will consent to stay at home.

Indeed, the exodus of American Girls into foreign lands can at worst only hasten that Americanizing of the world, of which some foreign authors are beginning to write essays; and therefore they may be doing their native land some service. They bring new ideals to foreign artists; new inspiration to outland poets.

Really, we have wandered somewhat from our subject, and can plead in excuse only that as trade follows the flag so do our thoughts follow the American Girl into whatever strange land she may decide that fate, in the shape of the little blind god, has called her. At home, she plays so many parts that there is, however, no excuse



DELIGHTS TO PLAY THE PETTY TYRANT

for crossing the ocean in the wake of the ocean-steamer that carries a few of her kind away.

We have no space to speak of more than the merest fraction of her notable activities. Who could not write in her praise a chapter upon a dozen or more of the capacities in which she is known? There is plenty to be said of her as "The Big Sister"; for how can a small boy of the right sort have a better guide, philosopher, mentor, and friend than she? Whether as deputy-mother, confidante, confederate, or companion in mischief, as consoler in trouble, and sympathizer in joy, he is a fortunate fellow who claims the American Girl as sister. And yet young men never welcome the proposal that another's sister shall play the part

toward them. Nor because we have dealt chiefly with the daughters of the rich, with the young lady of fashion and social rank, must it be thought that we do not credit to her of humbler station virtues as great or greater.

Wealth enables the fortunate possessor to live out her thoughts, gives time and leisure for other than the more prosaic duties, and makes a girl such that she is the more available subject for artist, or writer, or dramatist. There is in every-day life plenty of the patched garments, the bread-and-butter round of duties, the trolley-car riding, the rainy-day traipsing, bundles, bills and bother.

The rich are often quite as subject to temptations, and to temptations that assume the most seductive shapes;



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THE DANCE

and if we can declare the rich American Girl sound and wholesome in her womanhood, we may be sure that this side of bitter poverty, of the poverty that forbids us to blame the poor creature whom it drives into wrong—we shall find the same high ideals, the same lovable character, the same (let us coin a word) "blessable" creature.

Fortunately neither goodness nor beauty are entirely dependent upon the amount of money a woman can command; graces of character are not paid as interest upon a balance at the banker's; wit, humor, and intellect are independent of income, and it is not only in poems that the rich young man holds the mistletoe above the head of Miss Nothing-a-Year, or that King Cophetua steps down from

his throne to wed the beauteous beggar-maid.

And yet, who will be so foolish as to deny that education counts, that a large estate often enables a family to improve from generation to generation, and that money increases the power of its possessors for good as well as for evil? He is a fool who marries money-bags only, and needs no punishment beyond that he brings upon himself. But the possession of property does a good and noble young girl no harm, and enables her to render herself doubly attractive to the eye that loves grace of line and beauty of color.

It is, doubtless, a matter for thankfulness that the young American Girl bids fair to be the richest of all the

daughters of the nations, and also seems destined to make the best use of the power and influence that money will give her. We may rejoice, therefore, that she has this in addition to her other charms; and be heartily glad she seems likely to be unspoiled by the fortunes the skill, shrewdness, and industry of American men are day by day pouring into her hands, and entrusting to her discretion.



THE AMERICAN GIRL AS THE BRIDE

VI

The American Girl as the Bride

Why does she read the end of the novel first?

It will be found that the answer to this apparently light and frivolous query leads one into many questions even more perplexing than the original. The object of an author is to pique curiosity. He makes his plot a puzzling and baffling tangle so that it shall keep speculation ever on tiptoe, imagining that his great throng of feminine readers will be in suspense until the very last chapter, and will cudgel their minds to discover by piecing bits together whether the hero really succeeds in winning the hand of the heroine.

Misplaced confidence! Every mother's daughter of his readers insists upon knowing this one grand essential fact from the very beginning, and if she can not ascertain whether the wedding-bells are to ring in the last pages—then so much the worse for the unhappy and the unread novelist. She "doesn't think she'd care to read that book, anyway," and tosses it aside in favor of the work of a more capable novelist who places on the last page, convenient to her prying eyes, an assurance that the love-affair ends as all should end.

Even serial publication, where it is impossible to read the last few pages first, does not serve the author's purpose of keeping his feminine readers in suspense until the end of the book.



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MISTLETOE

For there is at least grave suspicion that serials are never read until they appear in book-covers. We believe this to be true, and we advise some enterprising magazine-editor to try the experiment of printing the last chapter of his serial in the first installment, so that his women readers may slake their curiosity as to the final fate of hero and heroine in the usual fashion.

Perhaps a frontispiece drawing of the wedding would be a good device.

We believe that this feminine custom is right, and dictated by a sound intuition. The proper subject for all novels is the love-story. The main interest in the love-story is the long battle of courtship, and the courtship that ends elsewhere than before the hymeneal altar is a battle that ends in a

retreat of both armies. It is a game of chess ending in a draw. It is a nine-inning game called on account of darkness. It is a bout of football without a goal on either side. In other words, it is foolishness; and a novel without the scene where she capitulates and gladly lays down her head upon his manly shoulder is no more than an empty babblement of vain words deserving never to



THE TRAVELED GIRL

be issued in an illustrated *edition de luxe.*

So we refuse to tell the story of the American Girl without that one all-important function—The Wedding—in our last chapter. We insist that she not only find the right man, but that he succeed in bringing her to bay in some conservatory or chimney-corner, upon a secluded balcony, in an air-ship, or during a tête-à-tête ride. We are willing to allow her but brief grace before she shall decide to entrust her fate to him, and shall admit that she "*can* love him—a little—she thinks."

Love him a little? She has been—for who knows how long?—trying to think of anybody, anything but his handsome face and stalwart frame. Her mother has been wondering, "What

is the matter with Gwendolen?" Her father has been thinking she "needs a change"—and he is right, though he has never dreamed how great is the change the little woman unknowingly longs for. Her small brother has been asking scornfully, "What's gone wrong with you, Gwen? You're no good any more!" And she has known that all these comments and criticisms are deserved. Life has lost its savor, and become a drama that fascinated while it tortured.

Then one day—possibly from the playful tongue of a girl-chum—comes the solution. She finds that the old, old myth of Dan Cupid is more than a fable. She knows that somewhere from ambush the sly little blindfold deity has twanged his bow, and

that the barbed arrow is fixed forever in her maiden heart. It smarts, but with a pain unlike all other pangs; and she would not have it withdrawn. For with the touch of the magic arrow she has learned a thousand things.

She had been wont to note with open-eyed wonder or with lofty scorn the demeanor of those wounded by the blind archer's shafts. She had reflected that such folly is not for such natures as her own. She had looked upon love as something far off, strange, beautiful perhaps, but distant beyond computation. And now—the mist has cleared from her eyes, and, behold! —she understands.

What was the merest folly has be come the very essence of romance. She comprehends the song of the

troubadours, the rapture of the poets, the dreams of the artists. The universe has swung about, and now revolves around a new centre, and that centre is the Love she had belittled and scorned.

She knows she has received a new soul, a soul that dominates and controls her being.

Now first she really reads the poets. Now first she comprehends the words of Shakespeare's *Valentine:*

"Love's a mighty Lord,
And hath so humbled me as I confess
There is no woe to his correction,
Nor, to his service, no such joy on earth.
Now no discourse, except it be of Love;
Now can I break my fast, dine, sup and sleep,
Upon the very naked name of Love!"

And there arises in her heart a new tenderness for all the world; for the old



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EXCESS BAGGAGE

that they have worn the livery of love, for the young in pity that they do not know his service. Truly has she been admitted into the outer courts of his temple, and begins to have an inkling of the greater mysteries that are within.

It is not to be wondered at that she walks for a season like one in a dream, for all the world has been made over before her eyes, old things are become new, and the new are comprehended as if they had been old. But it is not all romance. If she knows the truth of the romantic poets, she can not deny the equal truth of the old Scotch lines:

"Love, love, love is like a dizziness,
It winna lat a body gang aboot his business!"

And now and again this leads to an impatience of the pleasant thraldom.

Then it is that the lover learns of the tiny claws that lurk in the velvet paw, and fumes with futile rage against the capricious little goddess whom he can neither tame nor conquer. Little does he know that she feels more keenly than he the pain she inflicts, and that his wisest course (were lovers ever wise) is to submit with a kindly patience until the April cloud is blown away and sunshine smiles again.

Sooner or later his time will come. The bird that escapes again and again will tire of her fluttering, and will give up the vain attempt to play at freedom. Or, to change the metaphor (for only in metaphors can we talk of lovers' ways), he must recall the days when he sought another prize—the shy, golden-speckled trout. After

many casts, the lure proves a temptation not to be resisted, and the timid fish is fast. Then is needed patience. Give plenty of line, but be ready to reel in at the first indication of yielding.

There is no need to go over the method once more, and we would not dare suggest that there is the slightest parallel, but—the wary lover may at least ponder to advantage the ways of the fly-fisherman.

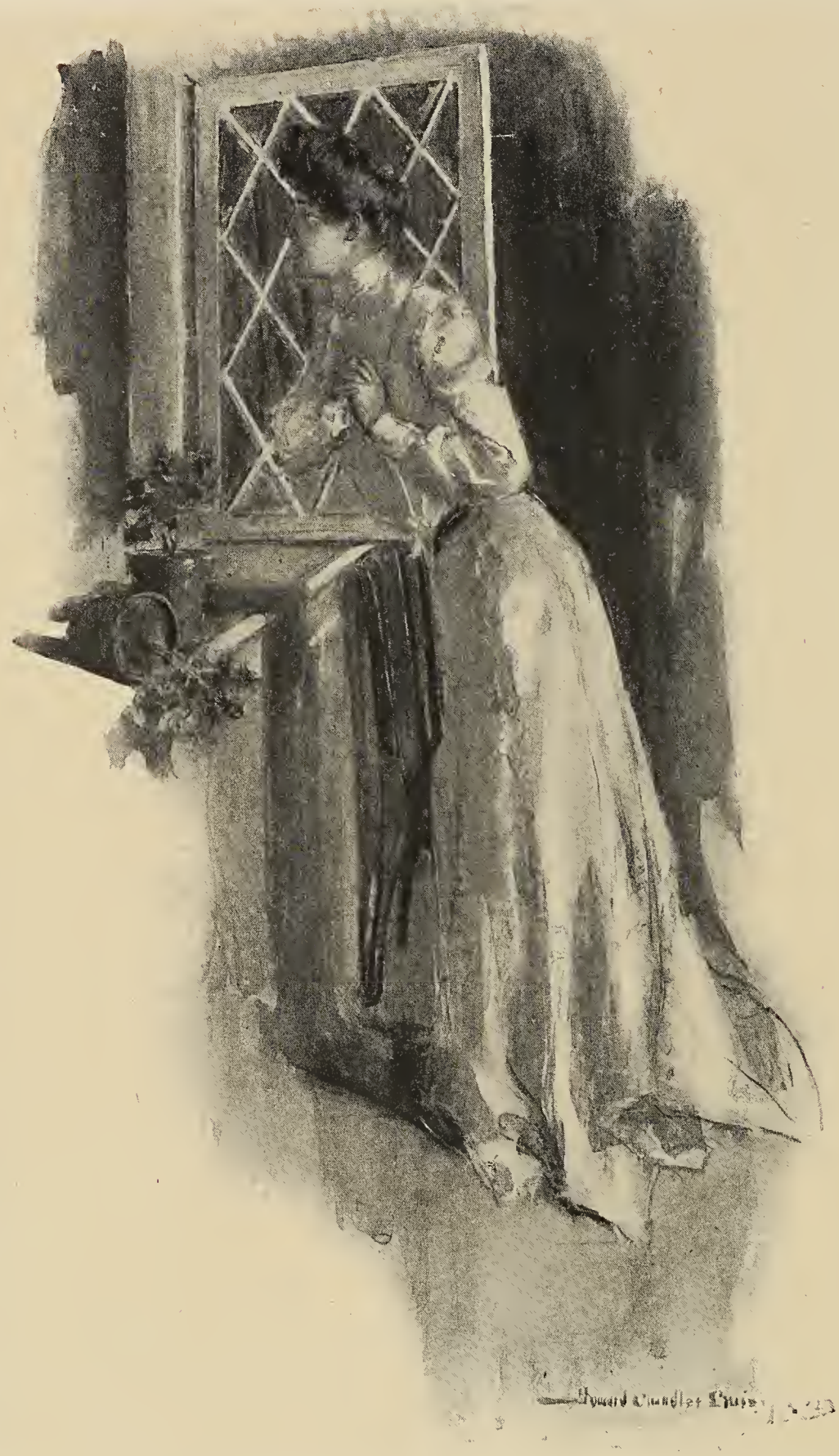
The fateful word spoken, the battle fought and won, and the solitaire being adjusted in sign of conquest, the adversaries work their way to an alliance, defensive and offensive. All at once the responsive duet comes to an end, and the chorus breaks in on the lovers' dream. Thinking they

are entering upon a world made for two, they suddenly discover that alliances are the business not only of the parties most concerned, but of all the world besides. Father, mother, sister, brother—nay, cousins, aunts, uncles, relatives to a remote degree—insist upon a hearing. Love concerns but two, but—the engagement is a different matter. None so poor that they do not find reason for an interest more or less direct. If it be not advice, it is criticism.

To the fiancée the solitaire assumes the bigness of a search-light, not to be overlooked by the most casual observer. And in proportion as her new-found love is deep and absorbing does she know the truth of Wordsworth's dictum, "The world is too

much with us, late and soon!'' She wonders what used to occupy the time of the busybodies who now can devote so many hours and so close an attention to affairs that do not seriously concern any but herself and himself. She takes counsel of those who have dared the awful perils of one engagement or more, and learns by their encouragement that the new nine-days' wonder will not last forever; that there will be, in time, other engagements and other happenings that will leave her and him in the peaceful seclusion both now so eagerly covet.

When these quieter days come she will begin first to taste the sweets of her new state. She will enter in earnest upon the first steps of that delightful study of mankind—man. She



AWAITING HIS COMING

will discover that——————[here the reader is requested to insert her favorite masculine Christian name] is not without his puzzling traits. She cares little for criticism, but replies in the words of another of Shakespeare's characters:

> "I know not why
> I love this youth; and I have heard you say,
> Love's reason's without reason."

But though her faith is sufficient for herself, she has a kindly pity for the blindness of those who can not see the virtues and excellencies of the rare being she has discovered. Faultless?—of course he is not faultless, but she—likes a man to be like that. She may have been foolish enough in her younger girlhood to have announced the general outlines of her

youthful ideal: "Tall, strong, masterful, brief in speech"—and so on, and so on. And behold, she is to marry one to whom her description can not be made in any manner to apply. Still—he is what she wants. If he does not quite fit the lines of her ideal—then so much the worse for that airy nothing. It was not half so nice, anyway.

Well, we all alter our ideals as life goes on; and we often find that the reality has a steadier arm on which to lean, a kindlier eye for our own favorite failings, or a more comfortable presence for every day than the chilly perfection we had conceived before the reality came to teach a riper wisdom.

The engagement is a fortunate device for easing the transition be-

tween single life and marriage. There is enough of comradeship, enough of common interest to allow of a preliminary run in double-harness, and yet freedom is not so suddenly lost as to leave a sense of deprivation. There are advantages in the little trial-trip. Some have accused the American girl of regarding the shackles of engagement lightly. If she breaks an engagement that her transatlantic sister would have kept, it is because she looks upon it as demanding a whole-hearted fulfilment. Finding at times that the engagement has not, behind the formal plighting, the sincerity of purpose which alone can give it sanctity, she chooses rather to undo the formality than to follow it by a marriage more faithless than the engagement. It

is not that she undervalues the engagement, but that she chooses a broken engagement rather than a loveless marriage.

And, indeed, there is no purpose in engagements at all unless to be broken if they do not suit both parties. The American Girl in this very matter shows her independence of forms and ceremonies when these lack the spirit that should give them life. She refuses, though at the behest of Mrs. Grundy, to sacrifice a life's happiness for the sake of conventional conformity.

We are crediting her with the highest motives, even if she is more apt to break an engagement than other girls. The American girl simply acts upon the advice of Davy Crockett. "Be sure you're right, then go ahead." When sure she is not right, she refuses

to go ahead. But we refuse to believe her a coquette or a jilt. There is a certain smart set that owes its prominence to printer's ink, and that belongs to no country more than to another. For the vagaries of these we refuse to hold the American girl responsible. They disregard certain conventions because of a love of license rather than freedom. Owing to the prominence given them by a venal journalism their faults and shortcomings receive undue attention, and, since in our own land this set is numerous and increasing, some of their characteristics have been labeled "American," though they belong exclusively to no nationality and to no period.

The American girl, with all her vivacity and brightness, is yet serious.

She does not shirk the duties of life, and having once resolved to exchange the independence of her girlhood for the more dignified if less free state, she loyally carries out her bargain, submits to the necessities of the case, and with ready adaptability "puts aside childish things." We have all watched the transformation, for, fortunately, it is the normal one. Who has not seen the pretty assumption of the dignity of the bride, the abnegation of much her maidenhood held dear, the resolute fitting of herself for all her new responsibilities?

It is not surprising that other young girls make much of their friend's wedding-day, throng about her, lend her every aid, march behind her up the aisle, and, when the buzzing reception

has succeeded the solemn ceremony, and the time comes for the "going away," watch with beating hearts the departure of bride and groom for the unknown land whereto they themselves hope one day to follow.

But though they leave all others behind, there is one little companion who claims of right a place among the indispensable baggage. The mischievous little imp Cupid, though invisible to the eyes of any wedding-guest, yet perches behind the wedding-coach, is transferred from coach to car, from car to steamship, and though they wander to the ends of the earth, never allows them to feel the lack of other company.

And so, as the happy Bride, blessed and blessing, we bid farewell to our American Girl.

EPILOGUE.

Like man, woman has her seven ages. She, too, begins as the infant and goes through youth to maturity and from maturity to old age. But to know her truly we must look upon her just when all her beauties, her powers, her graces and her virtues are at their early maturity.

Hence we have tried to present to you some pictures and some interpretations of the girl rather than the woman. But the qualities herein declared to be characteristic of the American girl are, either in greater or lesser degree, those that belong to the whole body of American womanhood.

We therefore can do no better than to end as we began—with a toast to

match the "Sweethearts and Wives," and so:

"Here's to the health, the happiness, and the prosperity of all the women of America—God bless them, every one!"

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